

CJA TRAINING PROGRAM FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF OKLAHOMA

The CJA Training program is a training and mentoring program for attorneys who want to apply to the CJA Trial Panel but lack the necessary experience or eligibility requirements. The Federal Public Defender's Office sponsors the program, led by the Criminal Justice Act Panel Administrators. Over 18 months, the program provides monthly seminars covering all phases of a federal criminal case and the sentencing guidelines. These training sessions address substantive federal criminal law, skills development, and practical points for effective representation. Additionally, the participants learn about the agencies specific to federal practice. Attendance at these sessions is mandatory for continued participation in the program.

Each participant will be assigned a mentor attorney to shadow on cases. The mentoring aspect is a vital part of the program. Mentees are assigned a mentor from the Federal Public Defender Office and the CJA Trial Panel. The mentee participates in all phases of the case, including initial client interviews, hearings, jail visits for detained clients, motion preparation, plea negotiation, trial prep, trial and sentencing issues. Mentees are compensated for only their in-court work at a rate determined by the Court. Participants should plan to commit approximately 10 hours a month to be successful in the program.

In addition to the valuable training provided, participants have the opportunity to build networks that strengthen their practice. Class members build relationships with each other. They are exposed to the federal criminal defense bar members, the federal bench, and other federal court participants. They also broaden their base of resources, contacts, and knowledge. Additionally, due to the significant amount of writing involved in federal practice, the program provides opportunities to work with the mentor to improved legal writing skills.

The selection process for the Training Panel is competitive. Each class is limited to 10 participants. A commitment to devote the time and effort necessary to succeed is a basic expectation. The attorneys chosen by the Federal District Judges must attend the mandatory monthly training sessions, participate in the regular training seminars presented by the CJA Administration office, and work with a mentor on cases over the 18-month time frame.

Applications are due February 28, 2023. For more information about this program, please contact the CJA Supervising Attorney, Kim Taylor, at 405-609-5969. Applications for the Training Panel can be found here – [CJA Training Panel Application](#).